

Tip #13 handrails & drawstrings: clothing causes school bus hazard



Drawstrings can be dangerous

Current styles and fads of children's clothing, especially drawstrings, have brought new injury risks. Some clothing can cause deaths and injuries by catching on bus doors or handrails, playground equipment, and cribs.

Items that can catch in these areas:

- Jackets, sweatshirts, and clothing with drawstrings at the neck or waist;
- Backpack straps, dangling key chains, scarves, belt buckles, and other loose clothing.

How can a drawstring hurt a child?

A drawstring at the waist, hood, or neck on clothing can catch in a small gap in playground equipment, a bus handrail, or on a bolt. A drawstring with a large toggle or knot at the end is most likely to get caught (**B**).

As a child gets off the school bus, a dangling drawstring or loose object may catch in the handrail. If the bus doors close and the child isn't seen, she could be dragged and run over by the wheels (**A**).

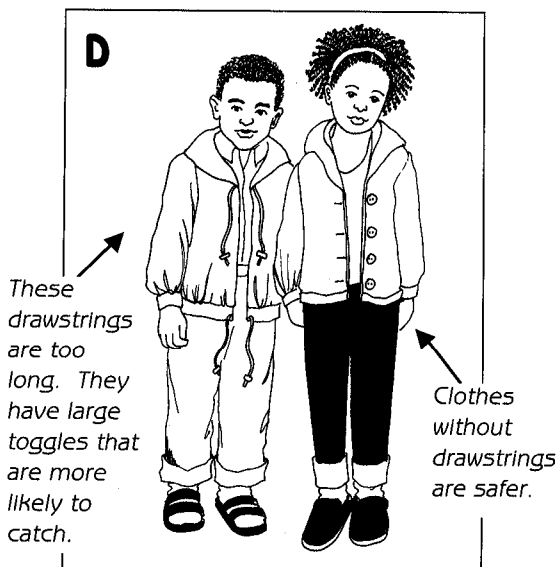
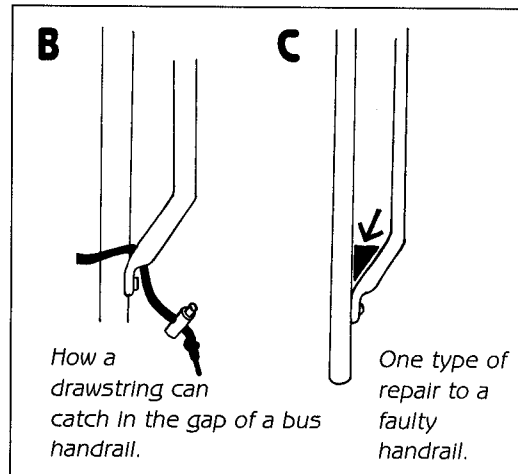
School bus improvements help reduce danger

While clothing changes are very important, school bus manufacturers and school districts are working to change handrails. New handrails are made so they won't catch drawstrings. Older buses are being repaired (**C**).

Bus drivers are trained to watch children as they get off the bus. Your child's bus driver should make sure each child has completely cleared the bus when leaving. He also should look for clothing that could get caught.

Simple steps make clothing safer

- Choose clothes without drawstrings — snaps, Velcro, buttons, or elastic are better choices (**D**).
- Remove hood and neck strings.
- Remove drawstrings from the waist and bottom of coats.
- Warn children about dangling key rings, large buckles, and other objects hanging from their backpacks.



**For a flyer on how to test for handrail snagging
or for other school bus safety information**

(including vehicle recalls), call the

NHTSA Auto Safety Hotline: 1-888-DASH-2-DOT

or visit the NHTSA website, www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

